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WEDNESDAY
SEPTEMBER 16, 1953

There was a badly needed rain during the night, but this morning it was clear and sunny. We breakfasted at ten o'clock, and this time we had fried eggs and chops with our champagne.

Another fine series of drives, with the birds presented in the most difficult fashion. Like yesterday, we had a short pause for refreshments at 4:30, consisting of pink champagne, ham sandwiches and fruit.

Our last drive finished at 5:30, and I just had time to get the 6:10 train at Amiens. The bag had not been counted when I left but the head keeper thought there would be about 225 partridges.

Jean and the guests provided fine retrievers. Without exception they were Labradors. The head keeper, Monsieur Ducret, is very hale at seventy-six and bounds over the fields like a roebuck. He has been on this place since 1900 when he worked for Jacqueline's father, James Hennessy. My recollection is that he said the best bag they ever had in a single day was 750 partridges, and they would kill about 3,000 in a season. The property is now considerably smaller. Jean shoots it only twice - two days each time - and they reckon on killing about 1,000 birds in the season. Ducret thinks, and I am sure correctly, that modern methods of tillage are increasingly unfavorable to game birds. Closer cultivation of land and consequently less ground cover, artificial fertilizer, and in the Amiens district a partiality for raising lucerne grass (which affords four cuttings, one of which coincides with the hatching period for partridge chicks) are all impediments to a full stock of birds. We killed a couple of quail today. This European (or, as it is often called, Egyptian) species is migratory - the bulk of them have already passed on to the South. They are much smaller than the American quail, to which in fact they bear no real resemblance, since our bird is very like the European

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partridge in plumage and habits but inferior in size. Windsor told me he preferred quail shooting in Florida and Georgia to any other form of sport, although obviously it does not demand nearly as much shooting talent as do well-driven partridges.

Tonight Chip and Avis Bohlen came to dinner with us. Chip was very interesting about the situation in Russia, where he thinks Malenkov is consolidating his position and, as Joxe had reported to me, was for domestic political reasons preoccupied with the necessity of raising the standard of living and somewhat relaxing terrorism and the most unpopular controls.

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